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Destruction of Files by CIA

CIA has only four known cases of file destruction in recent years; three of these files came under the general category of "files on Americans". The four cases are as follows:

(1) Certain records concerning a CIA-sponsored drug testing program were destroyed in January 1973 by action of a retiring CIA official. Former DCI Colby had no association whatever with the destruction of this set of files. Since the case is still under investigation by the Department of Justice, it would be inappropriate to comment further. These files may well have identified at least some of the Americans who were used unwittingly in the drug testing program.

(2) No files were destroyed as a result of the CIA internal investigation of questionable activities conducted in May - June 1973 by DCI Schlesinger. Mr. Colby, when he issued implementing instructions in August 1973, did confirm his earlier order to destroy a single set of files, dealing with arrest records in Washington, D. C. and Chicago. (For the DCI's information - there were 13,400 hard copy arrest records and an associate index dealing with suspected homosexuals and sexual perverts. Some names were in the file innocently - eg, names of those living in the same apartment building with a known homosexual. The Office of Security used this file in checking applicants and contractor employees.)

(3) In 1974 Colby, as a result of a continuing look at CIA-held files on Americans, ordered the destruction of a file containing the automobile licenses of residents of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. This file was reduced to licenses of Agency employees, an action accomplished by May 1974.

(4) In July 1975 an individual CIA employee, acting entirely on his own and without approval of any senior official, destroyed a set of files which he thought might involve him in a questionable activity. The set had no connection with Americans and largely involved overseas activities. This act is also still under investigation by the Department of Justice.